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BALDOCK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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ANNUAL REPORT  
of the  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
for the year  
1952

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BALDOCK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

To the Chairman and members of the Council

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Lewis and Gentlemen

By direction of Ministry of Health circular 2/53 I submit a report on the health and sanitary conditions of your district for the year 1952.

Again the local vital statistics continue favourable, the death rate for the year being exceptionally low and reflecting a markedly younger-than-average local age distribution. The Registrar General again supplies for Baldock a Comparability Factor (for deaths) of 1.22 against the national deathrate. Your particularly pressing local problems of housing and overcrowding from subtenancy continue from a situation where the number of live births is more than twice the local deaths.

There was again a marked absence from the district of serious infectious disease during the year.

I would acknowledge having received during the year every consideration and help from your Council and its officers.

I am, Mrs. Lewis and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

V. R. WALKER

District Medical Officer of Health.

June, 1953.

SECTION A    LOCAL STATISTICS.

Area of District	...	...	...	...	...	542 acres.
Population - Registrar General's Estimate for mid-1952	...	...	...	...	...	6,304
Number of separately rated hereditaments at 31st December, 1952...	...	...	...	...	...	1,798
Number of separate dwellings (included in above figure) at 31st December, 1952.	...	...	...	...	...	1,590
Rateable Value..	...	...	...	...	...	£35,166
Sum Represented by a Penny Rate....	...	...	...	...	...	£133.16.2d.

Extracts from Vital Statistics for the Year 1952

LIVE BIRTHS:

	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>BALDOCK URBAN DISTRICT</u>	<u>Comparable rate for England and Wales.</u>
Legitimate	102	59	43		
Illegitimate	4	2	2		
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>		
	106	61	45		
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>		
Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population...	...	...	...	16.8	15.3

DEATHS: 46 24 22

Rate per 1,000 of  
the estimated  
resident population... 7.3 11.3

STILL BIRTHS:

Legitimate	2	1	1
Illegitimate	1	1	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3	2	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Rate per 1,000  
total (live and  
still) births... 27.5 22.6

DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR:

Rate for all infants per 1,000 live births 9.4 27.6

Actual number of such deaths:

	(a) under 4 <u>weeks</u>	and (b) totals under <u>1 year</u>
Legitimate	...	1
Illegitimate	...	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	-	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>
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Deaths from Puerperal causes ... -  
Deaths from Cancer (all sites) ... 8  
Deaths from Measles ... -  
Deaths from Whooping Cough... -  
Deaths from other infective and  
parasitic diseases ... -

Comment on vital statistics for the Year.

The estimated mid-year population again shows an increase,  
this time of 282.

The local birthrate is again noticeably high and the  
exceptionally low deathrate (7.3) reflects the younger-than-  
average age distribution of local population.

The stillbirth rate slightly exceeds the national figure but is more than balanced by the very favourable infant death-rate.

The chief causes of death were: Heart and Other Circulatory Diseases, 18: Cancer (all sites) 8: and Vascular Lesions of the Nervous System, 4.

#### SECTION B      GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES.

No important change occurred during the year.

#### SECTION C      SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

1. Water Supply. All premises in the district are provided with a direct piped supply of water, which is treated and supplied in bulk by the First Garden City Ltd. The supply has been satisfactory both in quantity and quality, and results of chemical analyses and bacteriological examinations of samples have also been satisfactory.
2. Drainage and Sewerage. Work at the Baldock Sewage Disposal Works, in connection with the Letchworth and Baldock Joint Sewage Disposal Scheme, commenced this year and is proceeding satisfactorily.
3. Rivers and Streams. Samples of water from the River Ivel were submitted regularly for chemical analysis, and the results showed that, although there was evidence of pollution, the water was capable of supporting fish life.
4. Closet Accommodation. All dwellinghouses in the district are provided with water closets.
5. Public Cleansing. A weekly collection of refuse is maintained, and the refuse is disposed of by controlled tipping.
6. Sanitary Inspection of the Area (other than dwellinghouses and food premises).
  - (a) Number of inspections carried out under Factories Act... .. 32
  - (b) Number of inspections carried out under Petroleum Acts.. ... 46
  - (c) Number of inspections carried out in connection with drainage and sewerage... 41
  - (d) Number of inspections carried out in connection with water supply and sampling 8
  - (e) Miscellaneous inspections... .. 56
  - (f) Number of nuisances investigated and dealt with ... .. 9
  - (g) Number of investigations regarding infectious diseases (Disinfection of premises was carried out in 1 case only) 9
  - (h) One case of bed-bug infestation was dealt with during the year.
  - (i) Rodent Control. During the year 71 separate premises were treated for infestations of rats and mice, involving 352 visits and inspections.
  - (j) Swimming Bath (Privately owned). During the summer months samples were taken regularly, and in all cases the results of bacteriological examinations were satisfactory and the amount of free chlorine at the outlet end was not less than 0.2 p.p.m.



## SECTION D      HOUSING

### Council Housing Schemes.

During the year 24 three-bedroom houses, and 33 two-bedroom houses and flats were completed and occupied, bringing the total number of separate dwellings owned by the Council to 838 (of which 288 are post-war dwellings).

### Private ownership

Five additional units of accommodation were provided by conversion, and five houses were completed during the year.

### Inspection of Dwellinghouses During the Year

(1)	Number of dwellinghouses inspected (for housing defects under Public Health or Housing Acts)...	38
	Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	91
(2)	Number of dwellinghouses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation..	2
(3)	Number of dwellinghouses (exclusive of those referred to under (2) above) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ...	18
(4)	Number of dwellinghouses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices under Public Health or Housing Acts:-	
	(a) By owners..	1
	(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	-
(5)	Number of defective dwellinghouses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or its officers...	15
(6)	<u>Housing Act 1936 - Overcrowding</u>	
	(a) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year..	10
	Number of families dwelling therein ...	21
	Number of persons dwelling therein ...	88
	(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year ...	2
	(c) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year..	2
	Number of persons concerned in such cases	15
	(d) Particulars of any cases in which dwellinghouses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority has taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding ...	-

## SECTION E      INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

During the year 50 inspections of food premises (including shops and market stalls) were made and, where necessary, informal action was taken to secure compliance with the Council's Byelaws and the Food & Drugs Act, 1938.

There are no ice-cream manufacturers in the district. Samples of ice-cream from retailers were taken regularly and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for bacteriological examination (methylene blue test). Of those taken 86% fell into Grades 1 or 2 and none fell into Grade 4.

There is no slaughterhouse, food factory, or dairy (other than one dairy farm, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture) within the district.

The following foodstuffs were condemned as unfit for human consumption:-

89 lbs. Imported Canned Ham.  
 96½ lbs. Imported Canned meat (other than Ham).  
 6½ lbs. Meat Products (pies, sausages, etc.)  
 7 lbs. Imported Canned Fruit.  
 -½ lb. Imported Canned Fish.

SECTION F PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

Total notifications of acute infectious diseases (after correction) were:-

Measles	161	Scarlet Fever	2
Acute Pneumonia	10	Whooping Cough	2
Infective Hepatitis	2	Dysentery	1

Apart from the epidemic of measles (occurring mainly in the 3rd quarter of the year) such numbers, particularly for scarlet fever, will be seen to be low. Of the 10 notified cases of pneumonia half occurred in the first quarter of the year during the prevalence of an influenza outbreak.

For yet another year no case of diphtheria was notified. Despite long continued absence of the disease from the district the offer of infant protection by immunisation continues to be accepted by a large majority of parents.

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Deaths during the year 1952.

Age Periods.	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 - 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 - 15	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
15 - 25	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
25 - 35	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
35 - 45	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
45 - 55	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
55 - 65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
over 65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	11	4	-	1	-	1	-	-

Deaths allocated by the Registrar-General after final transfers:

-	1	-	-
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New notifications appear to show a marked rise but of the total of 15 respiratory cases 9 were inward transfers to a local hostel of trainees attending a nearby training centre. Such cases are usually quiescent and non-infectious.

One death occurred from respiratory tuberculosis during the year.

V.R.WALKER  
 District Medical Officer  
 of Health.

June, 1953.

